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UNCLAS ABUJA 002326

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: LETTER FROM CHEVRON NIGERIA: ESCRAVOS  
OCCUPATION ENDS

Ref: Lagos 1460

1. Ambassador Jeter received the following letter from Chevron Nigeria Limited, signifying the end of the occupation of Chevron's Escravos storage facility by Ugborodo women in Delta State:

Begin Text

END OF OCCUPATION OF ESCRAVOS TANK FARM BY UGBORODO WOMEN

=Salutations

We are happy to inform you of the peaceful resolution of the occupation of our Escravos Tank Farm and Terminal by protesting women from the Ugborodo communities. The women have vacated the facility and returned to their various homes following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by our management and leaders of the communities.

Throughout the period of occupation, there was no injury to, or loss of life of, any of our workforce, including the American nationals. Normalcy is gradually returning to our Escravos operations and we can once again guarantee a favorable working environment, devoid of fear and harassment, for our employees and contractors.

We appreciate your show of concern and interest in our affairs during the occupation and would like to re-assure you of our paramount commitment to safe operations, especially the safety of our people.

Complimentary Close,

J.R. Pryor

End Text

2. (U) Comment: This takeover falls on the heels of an April situation in Escravos, during which twenty-five local youths held forty Chevron Texaco employees hostage. The situation was resolved without incident and despite the peaceful resolution of this most recent takeover, Chevron still faces many challenges to operating business as usual. There are unconfirmed news reports of yet another potential interruption to Chevron's operations as apparently inhabitants of villages that did not participate in the recent agreement may be clamoring for equal treatment

2. (U) Women and children seem to be the new wave of protestors in the Delta. Situations like these will be increasingly difficult for oil companies to counteract. Inevitably, production will be impacted. Throughout the eleven-day ordeal, Chevron lost nearly 300,000 barrels of oil a day. If this trend holds, a serious threat may be posed to Nigeria's number one source of foreign earnings. The silver lining in all of these developments, if there can be one at all, is that no one was hurt nor does there appear to be an intent to physically harm any of the oil companies' personnel, Nigerian or expatriate. End Comment.  
JETER